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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CIA-04 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 SAL-02 UPW-01
COM-02 E-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 IO-11 NIC-01 EUR-14
RSR-01 /153 W

011718

R 011124Z OCT 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0629
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USDEL FRANCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Donna Bowen DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LABOR AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

REF: SAIGON A-151 Pol 14 Viet S
XR Lab 3-2 viet S

1. SUMMARY. SUNDAY'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HAS WON THE SEAL OF APPROVAL OF VIETNAM'S FOREMOST LABOR LEADER, TRAN QUOC BUU. HE STANDS OUT IN CONTRAST TO OTHER UNION LEADERS, MOST OF WHOM ARE SAYING NOTHING. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER "INTERVIEW" PUBLISHED BY VIETNAM PRESS OCT. 1, BUU, PRESIDENT OF THE VIETNAMESE CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (CVT) AND ITS ALLIED WORKER-FARMER PARTY, GAVE HIS APPROVAL TO HOLDING THE ELECTION AS SCHEDULED, BUT DID NOT SPECIFICALLY ENDORSE PRESIDENT THIEU. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POINTS:

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A. WHILE REGRETTING THE PRESENCE OF ONLY ONE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, BUU SAID THAT THE OCT 3 SHOULD PROCEED AS REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTION LAW. DOING SO, BUU ADDED, WOULD PREVENT THE "POLITICAL VACUUM THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE ALWAYS READY TO EXPLOIT."

B. ALTHOUGH CONCEDING THAT PROTESTS ARE PART OF DEMOCRACY, BUU WARNED THAT WIDESPREAD PUBLIC DISTURBANCES USUALLY BECOME "GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FROM WHICH DISHONEST MERCHANTS AND THE COMMUNISTS PROFIT," TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

3. RADIO AND TV TODAY ARE STRESSING BUU'S CRITICISM OF PUBLIC DISTURBANCES.

4. BUU SPOKE IN HIS ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE WORKER-FARMER PARTY. HE IMPLIED THAT HIS WAS NOT A FORMAL STATEMENT OF THE PARTY, THOUGH HE SAID HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES WERE "CONSULTED."

5. BUU CONCEDED THAT DISAGREEMENT EXISTED IN HIS PARTY'S RANKS. THE MOST NOTABLE DISSENTER IS SENATOR HUYNH VAN CAO, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY, A LONG-TIME THIEU SUPPORTER WHO RECENTLY TURNED AGAINST HIM. BUU SAID THAT CAO HAS BEEN EXPRESSING HIS "PERSONAL POSITION," AND ADDED THAT CONFLICTING VIEWPOINTS CAN BE EXPECTED IN A DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION.

6. THE STATEMENT DID NOT WHITEWASH THE ELECTION. "THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT THIEU IS THE ONLY CANDIDATE IS A MISTAKE OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT," BUU SAID. "BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE OTHER (FORMER) CANDIDATES ARE COMPLETELY BLAMELESS FOR THIS SITUATION."

7. IN CONTRAST TO BUU, THE VIETNAMESE CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (CGSL), HEADED BY PRO-KY BUI LUONG, ON SEPT 29 ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE DECLARING ITS "FIRM OPPOSITION TO THE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ONE-MAN ELECTION." PREVIOUSLY, THE CGSL HAD JOINED THREE OTHER SMALL UNION GROUPS--CHIEFLY THE RAILROAD WORKERS--IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT DENOUNCING THE ELECTION.

8. MOST LABOR LEADERS, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN SILENT PUBLICLY. PRIVATELY, THEY OFTEN VOICE THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH AN UNCONTESTED ELECTION BUT ADMIT THAT THERE IS NO ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE.

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9. BUU EXPECTS SHARP CRITICISM FOR HIS PUBLIC DECLARATION. PERHAPS TO DEMONSTRATE HE IS NOT "SOFT." BUU HAS APPROVED THE SAIGON CVT COUNCIL'S PLAN TO CALL A HALF-DAY "GENERAL STRIKE" IN SAIGON THE MORNING OF OCT 5. ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF THE STRIKE: TO PROTEST AGAINST THE SEPT 21 BOMBING OF THE CVT HEADQUARTERS. BUU SAYS IT WILL BE THE FIRST ANTI-COMMUNIST STRIKE IN VIETNAM'S HISTORY.
BUNKER

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